

Department of Commerce COMMITTS Preferred Source Policy

Section 1 - Commerce Information Technology Solutions (COMMITTS) Program Overview

- 1.1 Program Introduction
- 1.2 Policy and Purpose
- 1.3 Definitions
- 1.4 Roles and Responsibilities
- 1.5 Authority

Section 2 – Operational Guidance and Procedures for Use of COMMITTS

- 2.1 Guiding Principle for Use of Program
- 2.2 Requirements Included in the COMMITTS Preferred Source Policy
- 2.3 Exempt Acquisitions
- 2.4 Exempt Operating Units
- 2.5 Waivers from the COMMITTS Preferred Source Policy
- 2.6 Resources for Utilizing COMMITTS
- 2.7 Applicability of other Departmental Policies and Procedures

Attachments:

- A COMMITTS Preferred Source Policy dated April 25, 2000
- B Contact Points and Contracting Offices with Delegations of Procurement Authority to utilize COMMITTS

Section 1 -- Commerce Information Technology Solution (COMMITTS) Program Overview

1.1 Program Introduction

The COMMERce Information Technology Solutions (COMMITTS) program is a government-wide acquisition contract (GWAC) that provides information technology services and solutions. The COMMITTS program is designed to accomplish three objectives:

- 1) Deliver top quality IT services and solutions to meet government organizations' missions.
- 2) Deliver IT services and solutions utilizing a streamlined acquisition methodology.
- 3) Provide a talented pool of small business contractors capable of delivering the government's IT requirements.

COMMITTS provides the Commerce Department and other federal agencies with an efficient and effective means of awarding IT service and solution requirements, and assists the federal government with acquiring essential IT requirements utilizing high quality performance-focused contractors. The program does this through the use of competitively awarded performance-based task orders. Under this acquisition structure, the basic contracts do not contain fixed contract line item numbers (CLINS) or labor categories. Instead COMMITTS contractors are free to propose the best solution to the specific requirement of each government agency.

Unless exempted (see FAR 16.505(b)(2)), each task order is competed under the COMMITTS fair opportunity competitive procedure. The COMMITTS fair opportunity competitive procedure maintains an ongoing competitive environment throughout the life of the COMMITTS Program. Free from the constraints of prescribed CLINS and products, the solution-based structure significantly improves each contractor's ability to craft innovative and state-of-the-art solutions. Also, the task order award structure significantly reduces administrative burdens by eliminating technology refreshment and engineering change proposals -- which are usually required to keep the task order's and contractor's products and labor rates current, and ensures that the government receives the best value for the taxpayer.

The program provides performance-based information technology services and solutions in three major functional areas:

- Information Systems Engineering (ISE) Support Solutions
- Information System Security (ISS) Support Solutions
- Systems Operations and Maintenance (SOM) Support Solutions

Additional information about the program may be found at website address <http://www.commits.doc.gov>.

1.2 Policy and Purpose

On April 25, 2000, the Secretary of Commerce issued the COMMITTS Preferred Source Policy. This policy states that all information technology (IT) [service/solution] requirements within the Department are to be satisfied through the COMMITTS GWAC unless there is a legitimate reason not to do so. (Reference Attachment A.)

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance and procedures for implementation of the Commerce Information Technology Solutions (COMMITTS) Preferred Source Policy.

1.3 Definitions

Acquisition(s) -- Includes purchase orders, delivery orders, blanket purchase agreements, task orders, contracts, interagency agreements, cooperative agreements, and memorandums of understanding.

COMMITTS -- The Commerce Information Technology Solutions Government-wide Acquisition Contract and program.

COMMITTS Program Office -- Located in Washington, DC, the COMMITTS Program Office awards, manages, and markets full service multiple-award IT contracts and related services for Commerce and other Federal agencies.

Delegated Procurement Point -- A contracting office and/or officers that have obtained authority and training to directly utilize the COMMITTS GWAC from the Head of Contracting for COMMITTS.

GWAC -- A government-wide acquisition contract.

Head of Contracting Office (HCO) -- The official who has the overall responsibility for managing an acquisition/contracting office within an operating unit.

ID/IQ -- An Indefinite Delivery/Indefinite Quantity type contract.

Information Technology (IT) -- Applied computer systems - both hardware and software, and often includes networking and telecommunications.

Office of Acquisition Management -- Located in Washington, DC, manages acquisition activities within Commerce and represents the Department on government-wide acquisition issues.

Requestor -- The individual requiring contracted IT solutions.

Requirement -- A defined need for IT support services or solutions.

Solutions -- A combination of IT services, software, and/or hardware that satisfies a requestor's acquisition requirement.

1.4 Roles and Responsibilities

- A. **The Requestor and the Contracting Officer** are jointly responsible for conducting adequate market research and documenting the reasons for a waiver from this policy. However, the Contracting Officer is solely responsible for approving the waiver. (See Section 2.5). The waiver may be subject to further management review as described below.
- B. **Heads of Contracting Offices (HCOs)** are responsible for ensuring that any waiver from this policy is supported by adequate rationale.
- C. **Director for Acquisition Management and Procurement Executive** is responsible for reviewing and approving acquisition plans for acquisitions over established thresholds. The rationale for a waiver to this policy will be a major consideration in the review and approval of an acquisition plan. In addition, periodic reviews may be conducted to ensure compliance for all acquisitions subject to this policy.
- D. **Chief Information Officer for Commerce** is responsible for granting Delegations of Procurement Authority (DPAs) for information technology resources over established thresholds. The rationale for a waiver to this policy will be a major consideration in the review and approval of a DPA.

1.5 Authority

The Commerce Department receives its authority to operate as an "executive agent" through the COMMITTS Program from the Director of the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB), pursuant to the statutory authority of section 5112(e) of the Information Technology Management Reform Act ("Clinger-Cohen Act"), 40 U.S.C. 1412(e). The executive agent designation provides COMMITTS with its government-wide contracting authority to acquire IT as defined in section 5002 of the Clinger-Cohen Act.

Section 2 -- Operational Guidance and Procedures for Use of COMMITS

2.1 Guiding Principle for Use of Program

Commerce Program and Contracting Officials must consider using COMMITS at the earliest stages of acquisition planning. COMMITS shall be considered for fulfillment of all IT service and solution requirements.

2.2 Requirements Included in the COMMITS Preferred Source Policy

Examples of IT requirements that are appropriate for performance under the COMMITS Program include:

A. Information Systems Engineering (ISE) Support Services and Solutions:

For example: IT Strategic Planning, Program Assessment, and Studies
Business Process Reengineering (BPR)
Software Life Cycle Management (SLCM)
Software Engineering
Software Maintenance and Licensing
Electronic Data Interchange (EDI), Electronic Commerce (EC) Support
Independent Validation and Verification (IV&V) Support
IT Research and Development
Other ISE Tasks

B. Information System Security (ISS) Support Services and Solutions:

For example: Mainframe Automated Information Security Support
Disaster Recovery, Continuity of Operations, Contingency Planning
Computer Security Awareness and Training
Computer Security Incident Response
Virus Detection, Elimination, and Prevention
Computer Security Plan Preparation
Certification of Sensitive Systems
Quantitative Risk Analysis of Large Sensitive Systems
Security for Small Systems, Telecommunications, and Client Server
Independent Verification and Validation (IV&V)
Other ISS Tasks

C. Systems Operations & Management (SOM)

For example: Office Automation Support/Help Desk
Network Support
Computer Center Technical Support
Media/Learning Center Support
Telecommunications Support
Seat Management
Independent Verification and Validation
Other SOM Tasks

Questions about an individual requirement's suitability for COMMITS can be directed to the Requestor's servicing procurement office, the COMMITS officials listed at the website address <http://www.commits.doc.gov>, or by calling the COMMITS Program Office at area code (202) 482-6100.

2.3 Exempt Acquisitions

The COMMITS Preferred Source Policy is not intended to adversely impact small, small disadvantaged, and women-owned small business concerns that are performing well for Commerce organizations under existing contracts. Accordingly, the following acquisitions are exempt from the Preferred Source Policy:

- A. Requirements that will be awarded under existing Commerce or operating unit contracts held by small businesses (i.e. Census ITS.)
- B. Requirements that will be awarded under existing Commerce Blanket Purchase Agreements held by small businesses (i.e. NOAA NITES.)
- C. Simplified acquisitions with a life cycle value less than \$100,000. (Including open market acquisitions, orders against GSA federal supply schedules, or orders under other GWACs.)

IT requirements traditionally fulfilled via interagency agreement, memorandums of understanding, cooperative agreements and the like are not exempt from the COMMITS Preferred Source Policy.

All other IT requirements, not covered by an exemption above, are to be awarded utilizing the COMMITS GWAC unless there is a legitimate reason not to do so. (Reference Section 1.2, Section 2.1, and Attachment A.)

2.4 Exempt Operating Units

The Patent and Trademark Office is exempt from the COMMITS Preferred Source Policy in accordance with its Performance Based Organization (PBO) authority.

2.5 Waivers from the COMMITS Preferred Source Policy

For those acquisitions that do not fall within the exemptions noted in Section 2.3, the Contracting Officer may waive the requirement to use COMMITS, when there is a legitimate reason to do so. The reasons for the waiver must be documented in the written acquisition plan. For those acquisitions which do not require a written acquisition plan, the Contracting Officer shall document the reasons for not using COMMITS in a memorandum to the contract file.

- A. Considerations in documenting the reasons for not using COMMITS should include the following:

- 1. Use of performance-based contracting principles
- 2. Life cycle value of the acquisition and its suitability for COMMITS.
- 3. Performance of the requirement by a small, disadvantaged, women-owned, or Hubzone contractor.
- 4. Renewals of existing requirements where there is acceptable performance by the incumbent contractor and documentation of that performance is available in the Contractor Past Performance System used by the Operating Unit.

- B. The Contracting Officer may consult with the COMMITS Program Manager, the Director for Acquisition Management, the Director for the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization, the Chief Information Officer for Commerce or the Operating Unit, or other agency officials in making a waiver decision.

2.6 Resources for Utilizing COMMITS

There are several resources available to the Commerce IT and acquisition communities for learning more about COMMITS, user agencies, and available services.

- A. Visit the COMMITS website at <http://www.commits.doc.gov>, or the COMMITS Business Opportunity Page at <http://commitsbop.osec.doc.gov>.
- B. E-mail the COMMITS Program Office at COMMITTS@doc.gov with your questions.
- C. Call the COMMITS Program Office at area code (202) 482-6100.
- D. Call your servicing procurement office for additional information.

2.7 Applicability of other Departmental Policies and Procedures


- A. Acquisitions processed under the COMMITS GWAC are exempt from the following departmental policies:
 - 1. Commerce Acquisition Manual Chapter 15-2, Formal Source Selection Procedures.
 - 2. Departmental Administrative Order 208-10, Management of Contracted Services.
- B. Streamlined documentation and review processes have been developed for COMMITS acquisitions subject to the Departmental implementation of OMB Circular A-11, Exhibit 300. Reference website address <http://www.doc.gov/cio/oipr/ITPLANPAGE.HTM>.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20230

APR 25 2000

MEMORANDUM FOR Secretarial Officers
 Heads of Operating Units

FROM: William M. Daley 

SUBJECT: COMMITS Preferred Source Policy

As you know, the Department of Commerce has worked hard to become the government's leader in providing contracts to small, minority and women-owned business. We are now the number one agency in government for the second year, thanks to your help.

We have also been an innovator. One of our major innovations is the COMMITS program - through which we have fast access to a list of excellent IT firms. Everyone who has used COMMITS - including my office, NEXRAD, NESDIS, and other agencies of government has been impressed by the outstanding quality of this program.

To ensure that COMMITS reaches its full target - that is, to provide \$1.5 billion in contracts to small, minority and women-owned IT firms - I have decided to go one step further. Effective immediately, Department policy will be that ALL IT contracts are required to use the COMMITS program unless there is a legitimate reason not to do so. (A legitimate reason means, for example, that you need to purchase a service that no COMMITS company can provide).

I want to thank you again for your participation in the COMMITS program and for helping to make our vision - of leadership in creating opportunities for small and minority business - into a reality.

COMMITTS Contact Points and Contracting Offices with Delegations of Procurement Authority to Utilize COMMITTS

A. COMMITTS Program Office

Address: COMMITTS Program Office
Office of the Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
14th & Constitution Avenue NW, Room 6521
Washington, DC 20230

Telephone: (202) 482-6100
Fax: (202) 501-8122

E-mail: COMMITTS@doc.gov
Website: <http://www.commits.doc.gov>

B. Commerce Operating Units with Delegations of Procurement Authority

1. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, including:

a. Office of Finance and Administration

- i. Acquisition Management Division
Acquisition and Grants Office
Silver Spring, MD
Website: <http://www.rdc.noaa.gov/~amd/index.html>
- ii. Acquisition Management Division
Western Administrative Support Center
Seattle, Washington
Website: <http://www.wasc.noaa.gov/services/amd/proc.htm>
- iii. Acquisition Management Division
Mountain Administrative Support Center
Boulder, Colorado
Website: http://www.masc.noaa.gov/masc/masc_prc.html
- iv. Acquisition Management Division
Central Administrative Support Center
Kansas City, Missouri
Website: http://www.rdc.noaa.gov/~casc/acquisitions/acq_index.htm
- v. Acquisition Management Division
Eastern Administrative Support Center
Norfolk, Virginia
Website: <http://www.easc.noaa.gov/proc/easepro.htm>

b. National Weather Service

- i. National Data Buoy Center
John S. Stennis Space Center, Mississippi
Website: <http://www.ndbc.noaa.gov>

2. National Institute for Standards and Technology

Acquisition Management Group
Gaithersburg, Maryland
Website: <http://www.nist.gov/admin/od/contract/contract.htm>